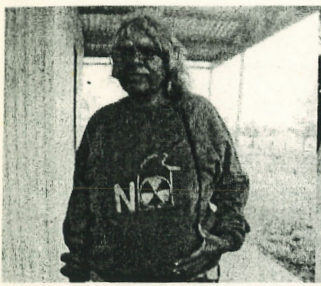
The Northern Territory Radioactive Waste Dump



Betty Sambo at Kalumpurlpa

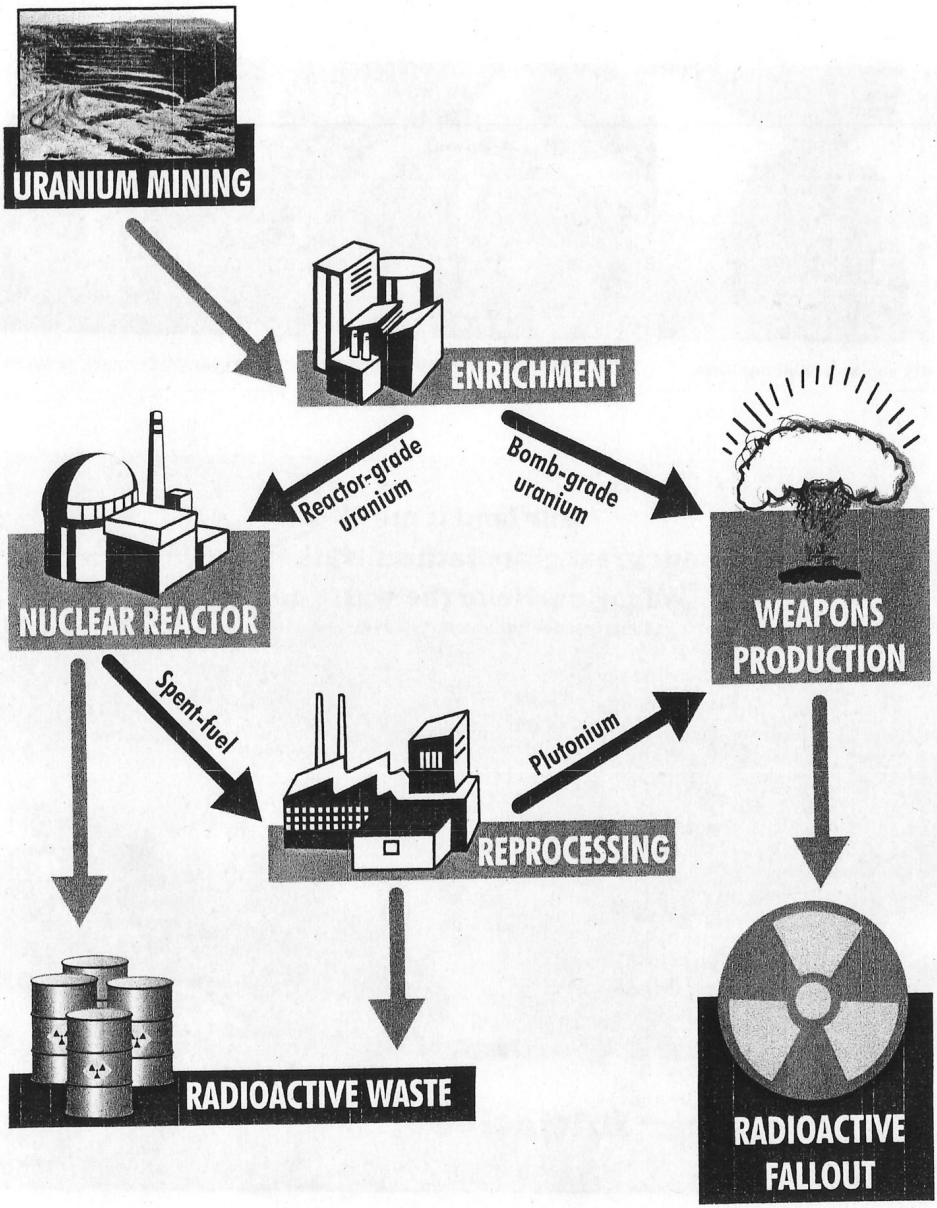
Tennant Creek rally September 2008

Steven McCormack at Werre Therre

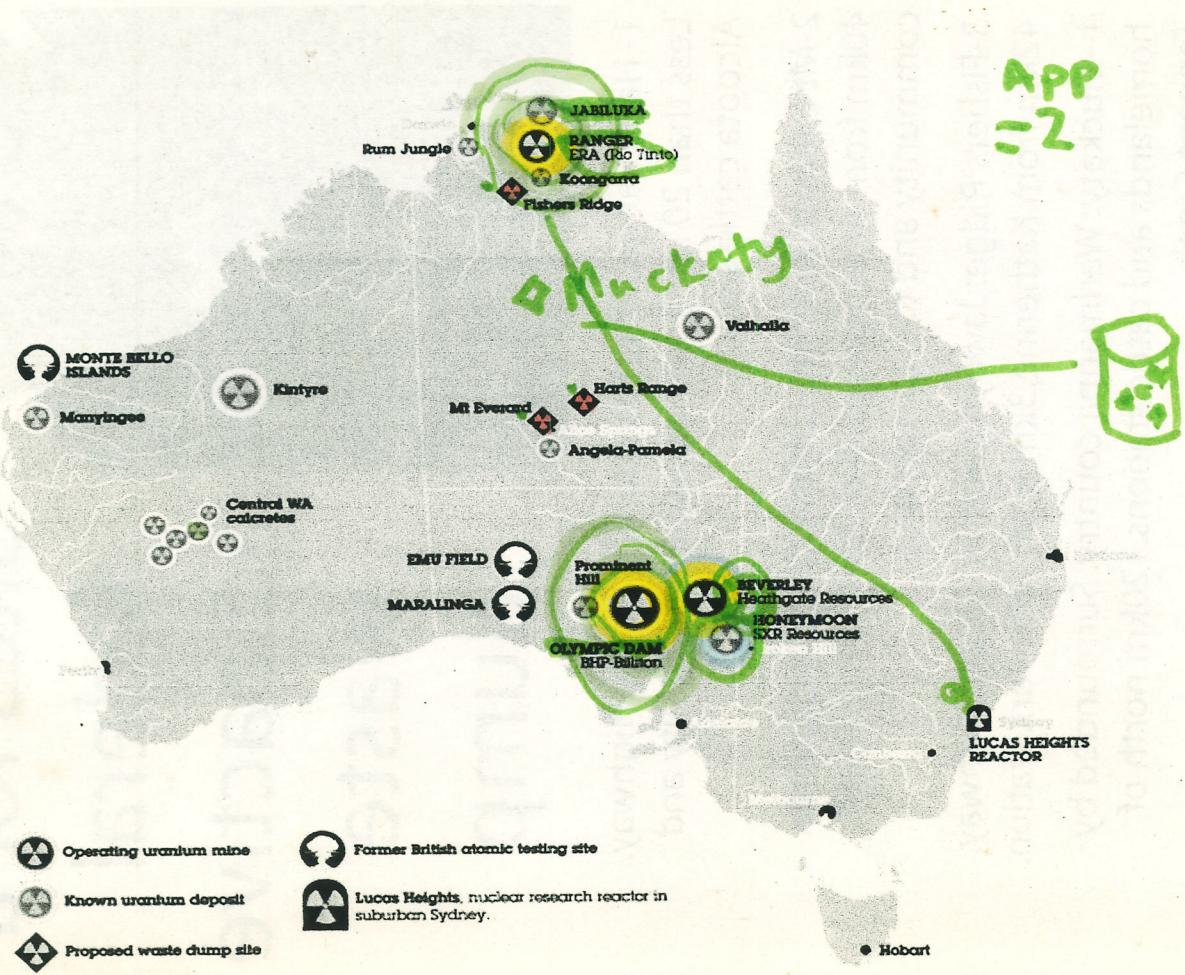
"Our land is our life.
Once our great grandfathers walked this land.
We say no. No to the waste dump".
Christine Morton-Muckaty Traditional Owner

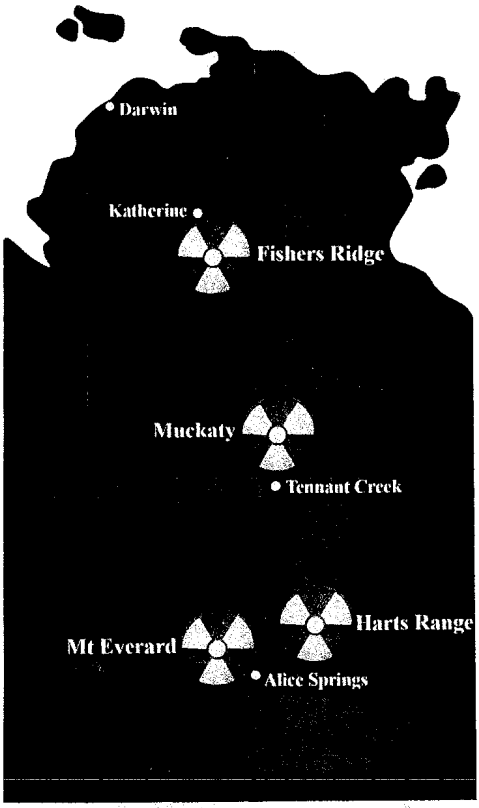
Beyond Nuclear Initiative
July 2009

Nuclear Fuel Chain



Yellowcake Country





Proposed sites for a federal radioactive waste dump

1- Harts Range: Arrernte country, Plenty Highway. Less than 20 km from Engawala community and Alcoota cattle station.

2-Mt Everard: Arrernte country, Tanami Highway. 40km from Alice Springs,3km from Werre Therre community and tourism project.

3-Fishers Ridge: Jawoyn country, Stuart Highway. 42km from Katherine,3km from Yeltu Park station.

4--Muckaty: Warlmanpa country. Surrounded by homelands and cattle stations.120km north of Tennant Creek.

What Waste?

The following list shows the categories and estimated volumes of radioactive waste earmarked for the Northern Territory dump:

1. Approx. 50 cubic metres of highly radioactive waste produced from reprocessing more than a thousand existing and future spent reactor fuel rods (Lucas Heights) – arriving over the next 40 years in containers, probably via Darwin Harbour;

2. Approx. 130 drums per year of radioactive 'compactable low level solid waste', e.g. vials, gloves etc (Lucas Heights);

3. Approx 20 drums per year of drums of solidified radioactive 'sludge' produced in the treatment of reactor wastewaters (Lucas Heights);

4. Hundreds of tonnes of radioactive 'non-compactable contaminated items', inc. materials from the decommissioned old Lucas Heights reactor, pipes, machinery

5. A stockpile of over 5,000 drums of 'low level radioactive waste' (Lucas Heights);

6. A stockpile of over 200 cubic metres of 'intermediate level solid waste' some with 'unknown radioactive inventory' (Lucas Heights);

7. Over 800 drums of 'historical wastes' including radioactive thorium, beryllium and uranium (Lucas Heights);
8. Over 2000 litres of radioactive contaminated charcoal (Lucas Heights);

9. Hundreds of used air filters containing radioactive contamination (Lucas Heights);

10. Around ten cubic metres of highly dangerous solidified molybdenum 'long lived intermediate level waste' (Lucas Heights);

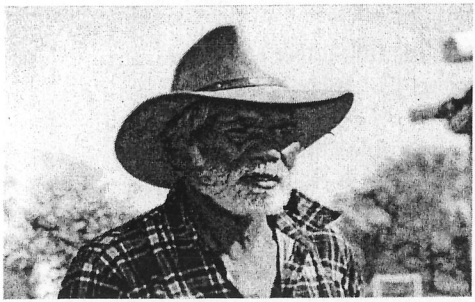
11. Over 2000 cubic metres of radioactive contaminated soil currently stored at Woomera;

12. Other Commonwealth Defence Department and CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) 'historic' radioactive waste.

Community voices

Alcoota -Harts Range

"My family lives at Engawala, which is about 20km from the Harts Range site. We don't want the dump because it is nuclear and nuclear material can be used for making bombs.
It can change country so it won't be the same and lasts a really long time".
Priscilla Williams, Atitjere community



Mt Everard

"This land is not empty - people live right nearby. We hunt and collect bush tucker here and I am the custodian of a sacred site within the boundaries of the defence land. We don't want this poison here"
Steven McCormack- Mt Everard Traditional Owner at Werre Therre community

Muckaty

"We use that land for men's cultural ceremonies which came from our great grandfather.
If they put a waste dump at Muckaty it betrays the next generation".
Sammy Sambo, Muckaty Traditional Owner

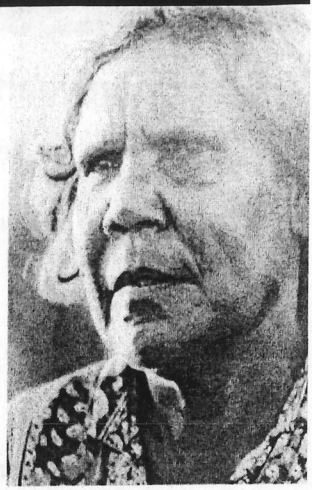
Fisher's Ridge

"Well it was shock horror, to think that everything was going along so swimmingly and then all of a sudden you're talking about a dump being in the middle of your property. It's going to impact on all our areas- our agriculture, our tourism, our cattle industry and our lifestyles".
Barry Utley, Yeltu Park Station
(pictured with the late Valerie Utley)

Community voices

Mt Everard

"I live just about 5ks from the proposed dump, and I'd like to keep the place clean for my children, my grandchildren and further generations. We go out hunting there, we go for our bush tuckers".
Audrey McCormack, Mt Everard Traditional Owner



Mitch, Engawala community

Alcoota-Harts Range

"If this nuclear waste is so safe, why can't they keep it at the LucasHeights nuclear plant in Sydney, where it is produced and where the nuclear experts work? We stand strong in our own culture as Indigenous people, and want the land and water to be protected for all children, black and white. We have enough issues of our own to deal with without having to deal with the nuclear waste".

"Top to bottom we got bush tucker right through the country. Whoever is taking this waste dump into our country needs to come back and talk to the Traditional Owners. We're not happy to have all of this stuff. We don't want it, it's not our spirit. Our spirit is our country, our country where our ancestors been born. Before towns, before hospitals, before cities. We want our country to be safe".
Dianne Stokes, Muckaty Traditional Owner
(pictured with her daughter Sky)

Waste dump laws

Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act

The CRWMA was created by the former Howard federal government in 2005.

It overrides Northern Territory laws that make a waste dump illegal.
It overrides the need for Traditional Owners to agree to nominating land for the dump.

It overrides the Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Heritage laws during site assessment.

It stops people from making legal challenges against the government for choosing their country for a radioactive dump site.

The CRWMA law allows the federal government to dump on communities and dump on democracy.

Before the federal election:
In opposition, Australian Labor Party (ALP) politicians called this law 'sordid',, arrogant' and 'shameful'. and promised to repeal it if elected.

The ALP National conference also voted to repeal the law.

Over one year later:
The ALP federal government has not told communities if or when it will honour these commitments.

Despite numerous requests from Traditional Owners, targeted communities, national environment and health groups and the Northern Territory Government, Resources and Energy Minister Martin Ferguson has not indicated when the CRWMA will be repealed or what will happen next.

Aboriginal people continue to live with a nuclear shadow and deep uncertainty.

Radioactive waste management options

The Australian Greens party put forward legislation in September 2008 to try and repeal the CRWMA and the excessive powers it gives the federal government.

This triggered a Senate Inquiry which recommended the repeal of the CRWMA and a new approach to handling radioactive waste based on the foundation principles of voluntary engagement, international best practise, inclusion, transparency and legal recourse.

There is an urgent need to do things differently and better with radioactive waste management in Australia.

Many groups have called on the federal government to end any plans for imposed dumps and have a fresh look at how best to address this issue.

The following groups all support a new approach and an independent and comprehensive public inquiry into radioactive waste management options in Australia.

Beyond Nuclear Initiative, Friends of the Earth Australia,
Australian Conservation Foundation, Greenpeace Australia Pacific,
Top End Aboriginal Conservation Alliance, Australian Nuclear Free Alliance,
Medical Association for the Prevention of War, Arid Lands Environment Centre,
Australian Student Environment Network, Public Health Association,
Anti Nuclear Alliance of Western Australia, The Wilderness Society,
Womens International League for Peace and Freedom,
Environment Centre of the Northern Territory.

There is no reason why Australia needs to pursue a remote dumping option.

Excerpts below are from evidence given at the 2008 Senate Inquiry
<http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/Committee/eca_ctte/radioactive_waste/hearings/index.htm>

28/11/2008 pg 15
Senator Anne McEwan (CHAIR)—
But it [reprocessed spent fuel rods] could be returned to Lucas Heights ?
Mr McIntosh *—Certainly there is no technical reason why it could not. Governments of both political persuasions over the years have told the local community that it will not be, but that ultimately is a political decision.

28/11/2008 pg 16
CHAIR—So then why does Australia mainly look at remote sites?
Mr McIntosh—I believe it is for political reasons, Senator.

** Mr Steven McIntosh is Senior Adviser, Government Liaison, Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO).*

UK CoRWM recommendations

UK Committee on Radioactive Waste Management,
UK CoRWM Final Report , 31 July 2006, at www.corwm.org.uk/

Chapter 14, Recommendation 10: Community involvement in any proposals for the siting of long term radioactive waste facilities should be based on the principle of volunteerism, that is, an expressed willingness to participate.

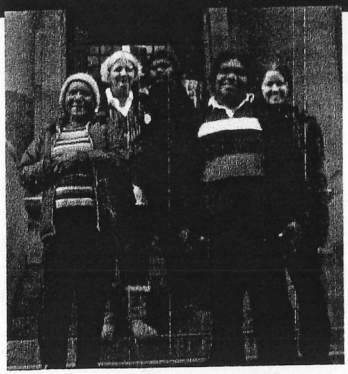
Ch 14, Recommendation 12: Experience in the UK and abroad clearly demonstrates the failures of earlier 'top down' mechanisms (often referred to as 'Decide-Announce-Defend') to implement long-term waste management facilities. It is generally considered that a voluntary process is essential to ensure equity, efficiency and the likelihood of successfully completing the process. **There is a growing recognition that it is not ethically acceptable for a society to impose a radioactive waste facility on an unwilling community.**

...vs Australia

"Most of our mob, we all found out when we read it in the paper. What sort of consultative approach by the government is that?"
Muckaty Traditional Owner Marlene Bennett

"...A friend rang us that night and said, 'Did you happen to get the newspaper'? We do not often get the newspaper. It mentioned that Fishers Ridge is to be one out of three sites chosen for a nuclear waste dump. The news turned our world upside down"
Barry Utley, Fishers Ridge pastoralist.

Community Campaign



National speaking tour delegates at Parliament House, Adelaide, June 2007

Engawala ladies, September, 2008

Rally for a Nuclear Free Barkly, Tennant Creek, September 4, 2008

Supporters in Sydney

No waste dump mob outside Northern Territory Parliament, December 2006

www.beyondnuclearinitiative.wordpress.com

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Arid Lands Environment Centre

Beyond Nuclear Initiative

Beyond Nuclear Initiative is a joint project of: Friends of the Earth Australia, Australian Conservation Foundation and The Poola Foundation (Tom Kantor Fund).